

Sequoia Regional Office of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Regional Advisory Committee Minutes

June 8th, 2016

Central Valley Regional Center, Fresno CA

**RAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Darlene Kilmartin, Nickole Mensch and Loretta Milne

**RAC MEMBERS ABSENT**

Marria Jones (E) and Matthew Legrand (E)

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director, State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Yolanda Cruz, Regional Office Manager  
Dawn Joest, CPS II  
Heather Kroencke, Office Technician Fresno

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

Loretta Milne chaired the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. She then welcomed everyone to the June 8th, 2016 Regional Advisory Meeting.

Self-introductions of RAC Members, staff, and guests, then followed.

The official roll call was conducted, and there was a quorum.

Loretta Milne asked if there were any additions/changes to the June 8th, 2016 agenda as mailed.

M/S/C to approve the June 8th, 2016, Agenda as mailed.

Loretta Milne asked if there were any additions/changes to the April 13th Meeting Minutes as posted.  
M/S/C to approve the April 13th, 2016, Minutes as posted.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Bebe Perez of Resources for Independence Central Valley wanted to thank the board and staff for the opportunity to apply for the Cycle 39 Grant. Her agency has submitted a proposal, and they are eagerly waiting for the notice period. She is also busy planning for the 7th Annual Self-Advocacy Conference held in October, more information to follow.

Pam Scarano, introduced herself, she is a provider and has been very active in the community for many years. She is always looking for ways to stay involved and keep up with current events. She was encouraged to apply for the Regional Advisory Committee. Aaron Carruthers of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities wanted to give a big endorsement of Pam as he has worked with her in many situations and she has extremely valuable input.

## **COMMUNITY REPORTS:**

Sidney Jackson, of Central Valley Regional Center, gave an update on the Self-Determination Committee and Community Trainings. They have been specifically directing training efforts to those clients who have named Employment as the main goal on their IPP's. So far they have 184 interested to pull from to fill the 144 slots Central Valley Regional Center has been allocated. There is a total of 2,500 slots statewide.

Aaron Olsen, of Central Valley Regional Center, began with his congratulations to the Regional Advisory Committee to be back to the regularly meeting. He is very excited to be back at our meetings and to pass on any information he has. One of the issues Aaron discussed with the Committee were the Provider Surveys that were sent to 1,000 Vendors in the Central Valley. The survey is meant to identify where funding should go that the State has approved (\$500 Million). They are looking to the results to determine this. However, only 1/3 of the surveys have been returned. Aaron Carruthers added that the Statewide response has only been 3% of surveys sent. The Regional Center staff are trying to follow up and get more surveys back but are facing many obstacles including a hard to understand/very technical survey, language barriers and misunderstanding of why the survey is being requested. The State has taken some of that input and updated the survey to send to an additional 500 random Vendors in our area. Aaron Carruthers is on one of the Committees that has been addressing how to get more responses and was grateful for the input from both Aaron Olsen and Pam Scarano that he can then report back some of the issues the local Regional Center Staff have experienced with the survey.

Aaron Olsen also updated that Heather Flores and other staff are working on the issue of all Community Care Licensing Development plans being sent to Sacramento and then no movement being made on the applications for eight to twelve months, even with persistent follow-up by CVRC staff. During that time frame, they have only had 3 of the 23 homes approved that have submitted paperwork. In July, they will be meeting to draft a letter to contact DDS or to request dialogue/discussions on how to make the process work more efficiently to get these facilities set up and clients placed.

Aaron Olsen announced the event Celebrating 50 Years of California's Regional Center System to be held at Inspiration Park on July 9th, 2016. There will be vendors, food trucks and lots of fun. The event is from 9:00 am-1:00 pm. RSVP is not required but is requested; you can contact Elvira Ocean at CVRC.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

Yolanda Cruz announced that the State Council Committee appointed two new Committee members as well as approved the three that we had previously recommended. Marria Jones, Darlene Kilmartin, and Loretta Milne have been approved, and Matthew Legrand, and Nickole Mensch have been appointed. Yolanda gave a brief introduction of Matthew and Nickole which included their background and the other groups they have been involved with.

Yolanda also suggested that for elections for Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, the candidates would nominate in August, and the voting could be held at the October meeting; The group agreed this would be best to try and see if we have any additional members by then.

### **STATE COUNCIL REPORT:**

Aaron Carruthers, the Executive Director of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, attended. He first wanted to thank the Committee for the warm welcome, and that he was glad to be there. In addition to other input he had already given, he wanted to know what other issues, concerns or questions the attendees might have for him. He addressed Glen Stewart's concerns on the Grant Cycle 39 application process. He stated that the Regional Offices would provide input on the applications that would then be presented to the State Council Committee that has been appointed to review the grants. The Council will discuss the Grant Proposals at their next meeting.

Pam Scarano wanted to discuss the timeline for the ABLE Act to be taking effect in California. The ABLE Act allows clients to save money without it affecting their benefits. It will act similar to a savings account. Iowa has become the first state to begin offering the services that were approved with the passing of legislation on January 1st, 2016. Aaron Carruthers informed her and the board, that he is currently on a Board with the Treasures Office that is working to find out how to put it in place in California. The main issue at this point is finding a bank or financial institution that is willing to provide the accounts to clients. The primary apprehension of the banks is if it will be a savings that you can contribute and not regularly withdraw from? Alternatively, will it become similar to a checking account with no withdrawal restrictions? The more 'actions' (deposits/withdrawals/transfers) that are required on the accounts, the more money it will cost the banks to provide those accounts. The other main concern that the State Council would like clarification on is, what will happen to the assets when a client passes away? They want to know what that looks like before endorsing any actions.

Aaron also spoke of the State Council and the Regional Office's as well as approaching the 5 Year State Plan. Last year a survey was sent out asking for what goals the agency should be focusing on. That survey had 3,000 responses. The top concerns were as follows:

1. Employment, this has been evident as a concern as a shift of focus of 'What benefits can I get?' to 'How can I earn a living?' has been happening in our state. The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) is an exciting outcome of this shift as well.
2. Health and Safety
3. Self-Advocacy- This is on-going through the Regional Advisory Committees as well as the Statewide Advocacy Network
4. Home & Community Based Services (HBCS)

Upon approval of the State Plan, it will be available through the website as well as through the Regional Offices.

The last matter that Aaron wanted to review was the current vacancies on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. They currently have three openings, one from the San Diego/Imperial area and two that can originate from anywhere statewide. They require at least one of the three positions to be a client that has resided at a Developmental Center. They have received over two hundred applications and plan to hold a meeting in early July to review them.

### **REGIONAL OFFICE MANAGER REPORT:**

Yolanda Cruz, Regional Office Manager, updated the RAC on the workshops that our office has been offering in the community. This year we have done 20 workshops throughout our catchment area. We have provided them at Regional Centers as well as Agencies and Day Program locations. One of the workshops was at the Creative Center in Visalia, where 80 self-advocates were trained with our "Lets Vote!" presentation. A handout was distributed to the committee that the Sequoia staff created a shorter

version of the information that was offered in the training. Also circulated, were copies of our new office brochure for the Sequoia Regional Office as well as a brochure that lists all the workshops we can provide.

Another large project that our staff has been focused on is a new partnership with a Housing Collaborative that will be hosting a Summit in August. We are very glad to be able to offer input to other community leaders and builders as to what the needs of our clients are. Yolanda asked if anyone would be interested in participating in the planning stages and/or event to please let our office know.

Our staff has also created an "Educational Review Collaborative" that is meeting monthly at our office. The concept was to create a group to help fill the void as our agency no longer provides individual advocacy, specifically in the educational setting. We currently have two attorneys, two special education advocates and a family resource center involved. We are interested in adding to the group. One of the goals of the group is to compile a resource list for advocacy assistance, evaluations and compensatory services for individuals and their families who are experiencing difficulty getting the services they need.

The next RAC meeting will be held on August 10th, 2016 at Central Valley Regional Center from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:01 p.m.